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ABSTRACT

This report analyzes current public education policies, procedures, and practices that compound racial inequities by profiling students of color. Such practices divert resources away from proven solutions that advance academic excellence. Bias in high-stakes testing serves to increase student achievement gaps. Zero-tolerance and maximum-security schools have discipline policies that commonly push youth of color out of school at rates disproportionate to their white counterparts. Recommendations include providing equal and universal access to quality teachers of diverse backgrounds and races, using small schools and reducing class size, eliminating exit exams, repealing zero-tolerance policies, refocusing priorities so schools and districts can receive equitable resources, and using racial-equity report cards as a means of educational policy assessment. This guide includes four essays: (1) "Horace Had It Right: The Stakes Are Still High for Students of Color" (Linda Mizell); (2) "Zero Tolerance and School Security Measures: A Failed Experiment" (Russell J. Skiba and Peter E. Leone); (3) "Apartheid in American Education: How Opportunity Is Rationed to Children of Color in the United States" (Linda Darling-Hammond); and (4) "Small Schools: An Anti-Racist Intervention in Urban America" (Michelle Fine and Linda C. Powell). Appendix I lists resources, and Appendix II provides authors' biographies. (RT)

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Racial Profiling and Punishment in U.S. Public Schools: How Zero Tolerance Policies and High Stakes Testing Subvert Academic Excellence and Racial Equity.

Research Report [and] Executive Summary.

Tammy Johnson
Jennifer Emiko Boyden
William J. Pittz

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RESEARCH REPORT OCTOBER 2001

RACIAL PROFILING AND PUNISHMENT IN U.S. PUBLIC SCHOOLS

How Zero Tolerance Policies and High Stakes Testing Subvert Academic Excellence and Racial Equity

By

Tammy Johnson • Jennifer Emiko Boyden • William J. Pittz

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BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN ANALYSIS AND ACTION

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A TIME FOR ACTION

Beverly Cross
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

Americans are increasingly aware of racial profiling as it is practiced in policing, insurance and real estate. We are beginning to understand how people of color are targeted, put under surveillance, and treated unfairly and unjustly based on race by those frequently considered well-intentioned cultural/social agents (such as police, welfare agents, medical professionals, etc.). Concepts like "driving while Black or brown" and, since September 11, "flying while Arab" are increasingly used in the media and are widely recognized. Racial profiling results in an oppressive state that creates racial inequities by denying people of color privacy, identity, place, security, and control over one's daily life.

What does racial profiling mean in the context of public education? In a recent discussion regarding the last few waves of school reform, a colleague in Ohio asked me, "Why does racism seem to upright itself in whatever we do in educational reform?" She and I discussed several reform initiatives (such as high-stakes testing, vouchers, zero tolerance, extreme security measures, and teacher recruitment) and how racism rests just beneath the surface of these and other policy decisions. Because racial profiling of students of color operates within the boundaries of accepted "normal" practices in our public education system, it is difficult to define, identify and root out. This report analyzes current public education policies, procedures, and practices that actually compound racial inequities by profiling students of color and diverting resources away from proven solutions that advance academic excellence.

BLAMING THE VICTIM

The process of blaming students of color for their own oppression and failure is a long-standing institutional practice. It diverts attention away from the systematic ways in which inequities manifest themselves in a supposedly democratic, free and progressive society. The result is that while students of color are blamed for the failures of the educational system, white students are viewed as normal, high academic achievers by some natural ordering process substantiated by tests and other psychological profiles of behavior, attitude and potential. White privilege in the context of education is exemplified in a variety of ways. White children are liberally represented in teaching materials, they have teachers with similar cultural experiences, neutral or positive assumptions are made about them, judgements are reserved about their economic class, they are tested on tests that are norm-referenced to their own group, and they are rarely considered the problems of the school.[1] However, there is little analysis of how these numerous white privileges create an inequitable context that advantages whites academically while denying students of color similar privileges.

Children of color frequently have the opposite educational experience from white children. They do not see themselves in teaching materials, their teachers do not share cultural experiences, negative assumptions are made about them, quick judgements are made about their economic class, they are tested on items not norm-referenced to their group, and they are generally considered the problems of the school. An invisible system of unearned privilege and power operates to maintain institutional racism and to assure that its cultural workers (educational professionals and systems) carry out this function.

In addition to white privilege, racial profiling works throughout the fabric of education. The following examples further illustrate how racial profiling works in education.

Segregation and Poverty: Although children report to legally desegregated schools everyday they actually face de facto segregated schools. White students attend schools dominated by their own groups, and schools are segregated by class as well. Even though "the greater the concentration of poverty in the school district, the lower the student achievement,"[2] insufficient attention is given to the conflated relationship between inequities and resources needed to implement proven solutions that advance academic achievement. White flight and neighborhood school initiatives are examples of just how schools are largely divided between the haves and the have-nots. Continuing residential segregation and inequitable support for education based on where one lives exacerbate inequities and deny resources for effective solutions.[3]

Drop out/push out: "High school completion rates for ages 16–24 have generally declined in the last 20 years. Roughly 87 percent of all U.S. students receive their high school diploma or its equivalent by the age of 24. Nonwhite and

Hispanic students drop out at two to three times the rate of white students."[4] This intractable problem of school completion results in severe marginalization for students of color in terms of economic status and life opportunities.

Test scores: The consequences of tests have been elevated to an all-time high. They are high-stakes because they determine what one will have access to learn, they determine when one can exit grade levels and schools, and they determine a great deal of future opportunities.

"The discouraging news is that achievement gaps between white students and non-white urban test takers are significant. Overall, reading scores were lower than math scores and achievement gaps between white and non-white students were wider for reading than for math."[5] Through the process of racial profiling this gap is explained by eugenics and innate natural abilities rather than lack of access to high-quality education for children of color.

Blaming the victim also indicts students of color for their educational failure while protecting systems and bureaucracies from sustained criticism. Thus the focus is locked on negative racial stereotypes, traits or assumptions rather than on the fallacies of bureaucracies, systems, unearned privilege, and the wider society. This leads to racial paranoia and people of color being defined as abnormal and naturally intellectually inferior. So educational professionals are relieved of the need to engage in social critique or individual inspection of how their work and the systems in which they work are inherently complicit in accepting racial stereotypes and reproducing the racial order. They do not have to challenge how testing, poverty, segregation, and tracking, for example, maintain inequitable educational opportunities for students of color. They do not have to think about the double bind that students of color face. If they stay in school, the systems that operate there will label them as deviant, abnormal and strange. If they leave school, they will face increased marginalization from society.

Photo: Jim West

Researched and written by a collaboration of professional researchers, community-based activists, and academic experts, *Racial Profiling and Punishment in U.S. Schools* is not

simply an effort to document institutional inequity in the public schools. It is a call to initiate much-needed changes including refocusing educational priorities to create small, manageable schools that provide every student with a fully certified, highly skilled math, science, and English teacher while eliminating racially biased exit exams and zero tolerance discipline policies.

In order to make these changes, the role of institutions in racial profiling and educational inequity must, therefore, be central to our future work. If the institution is not the focus of criticism, the invisible practices of racial profiling to produce educational inequality will continue. Will we allow this history of racism in education to recreate itself in new ways over and over again to affect generations to come? Can we face it now? Can we fight to eliminate it now? Not without action.

HIGH-STAKES TESTING

"We lack resources, we have no money, and other schools when you look at their high [test scores] you wonder why. It's because they have money, they have resources. They have all that which we need over here at the bottom and people don't even bother to think maybe that's the problem. And yet you want to blame it on the youth."

16-year-old student,
Oakland Unified School District [6]

Jimmy, a hardworking African American high school student in Boston's low-income Dorchester neighborhood, was distressed to learn that he was behind his peers by one math credit. His options included taking a night-school course, which would conflict with his 30-hour-a-week job, or staying back one year and graduating with the first class to be required to take the Massachusetts high school exit exam. If he didn't graduate before the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) became mandatory, his counselor warned, then he surely wouldn't graduate at all. This is hardly an appropriate expectation to set for an aspiring young student. But unfortunately it is far too realistic. Fewer than 100 students in this school of nearly one thousand students of color will pass the exam. And for the thousands of students of color in the state who will enter the job market without a diploma, the results will be catastrophic. In the words of one Massachusetts official, "We are going to create a Black and Latino undereducated class of victims of the test."[7]

From state to federal mandates, we are in the midst of a movement to use standardized tests as the sole measure of academic achievement. In his federal education reform plan, *No Child Left Behind,* President Bush acknowledges that the "academic achievement gap between rich and poor, Anglo and minority is not only wide, but in some cases is growing wider still." Rather than prioritizing proven reforms such as teacher training or smaller class size, however, President

Bush's solution is to hold students accountable to academic standards based on test scores, with little to no additional assistance to underfunded, underperforming schools. Moreover, Bush's plan to "reward success and sanction failure" links Title I funds for schools to test results, so that states with public schools that need the most assistance are at risk of losing critical funding. This creates a perverse set of incentives that undermine the goal of a quality education, and encourage "teaching to the test," remedial education tracking, forced grade repetition, and increased drop out rates.

80 percent of respondents to a Californians for Justice survey agree that money spent on standardized tests could be put to better uses.

Many states have followed President Bush's model by using education funds as incentives for test performance. Such "incentives" remove resources from the students and schools that need them most. In California, for example, the $667 million Governor's Performance Awards Program awards money to schools on the basis of test score improvement. Low-income students and students of color are less likely to benefit from this influx of resources than their more affluent counterparts, as they are less likely to have the resources to prepare them for taking the very tests that affect their funding. According to the non-partisan California Budget Project, schools that qualified for awards have more fully credentialed teachers, smaller enrollments, higher percentages of white students, and fewer poor students.[8] California also grants college scholarships to individual students on the basis of their test scores, again with unequal results. In Oakland, California, for example, African American, Latino and Pacific Islander students only received 33.9 percent of the rewards, despite comprising 76 percent of the student population.[9] The "rewards and sanctions" that follow standardized testing disproportionately benefit white middle-class students, and use scarce education tax dollars to widen the racial achievement gap in our public schools. Rather than advancing toward equal opportunity for a high-quality education, high-stakes tests exacerbate racial inequalities and decrease the quality of education for all students.

ARE HIGH-STAKES TESTS RACIALLY BIASED?

When racism is measured only by intent, rather than impact, policies such as standardized testing are seen as race-neutral rather than as institutionally racist. Even if one believes that the exams are not racist in their intent, the high-stakes attached to them create unequal racialized outcomes. What we know for certain is that standardized tests derive from racist origins and punish the victims of pre-existing inequalities. These tests reinforce institutional racism in several ways:

They are founded on the racist notion that intelligence is genetically determined by race. Many standardized intelligence tests have been discredited due to racial bias or having a racist history. The nation's first standardized achievement test was designed by Lewis Terman, a Stanford psychologist who was fascinated with the notion that tests could prove the link between intelligence and race.

His exam, called the SAT-9, is still mandatory today for all California students in grades 2 through 11 regardless of their English language proficiency. Meanwhile, the SAT, proven to be a better indicator of parents' wealth than of academic ability, disproportionately excludes students of color from the ranks of the college-educated.[10] Many standardized tests, therefore, measure circumstance rather than natural ability. Their dubious validity, coupled with their role of academically disadvantaging students of color, builds upon their origins in the eugenics movement and perpetuates false notions of white intellectual superiority.

They exacerbate racial inequality. There are vast inequalities in our schools, especially according to the race and income of the students. Differences in learning opportunities *prior* to taking the tests play a significant role in determining test scores. High-stakes tests incorrectly assume that there is a level playing field, then aggravate existing inequalities by assigning sanctions such as grade retention, remedial placement, diploma denial, or college rejection, thereby profoundly diminishing people of color's long-term prospects. For example, the Illinois Legislature recently passed a bill that allows administrators to remove students from regular classrooms and place them in alternative programs if they are at risk of failure. Massachusetts is considering similar legislation, which opens the door for administrators to use a punishment once reserved for disruptive behavior to remove students who perform poorly on the state's high-stakes exams.[11] Hence, the racist outcomes of standardized exams impact not only high school graduation and college attendance, but also opportunities to learn while in school.

They divert resources away from creating equitable high-quality education for all. The hundreds of millions of dollars being spent on high-stakes tests do little to improve academic performance of students and do a lot to aggravate pre-existing inequalities. This money could be more fairly spent on reforms that are known to work such as high-quality teachers and small class size. Moreover, federal legislative proposals include sanctions for low-performing schools such as private management of schools, school voucher and tax credit programs, turnover to charter schools, funding penalties, or state takeover. Unlike traditional public schools that are open to all,

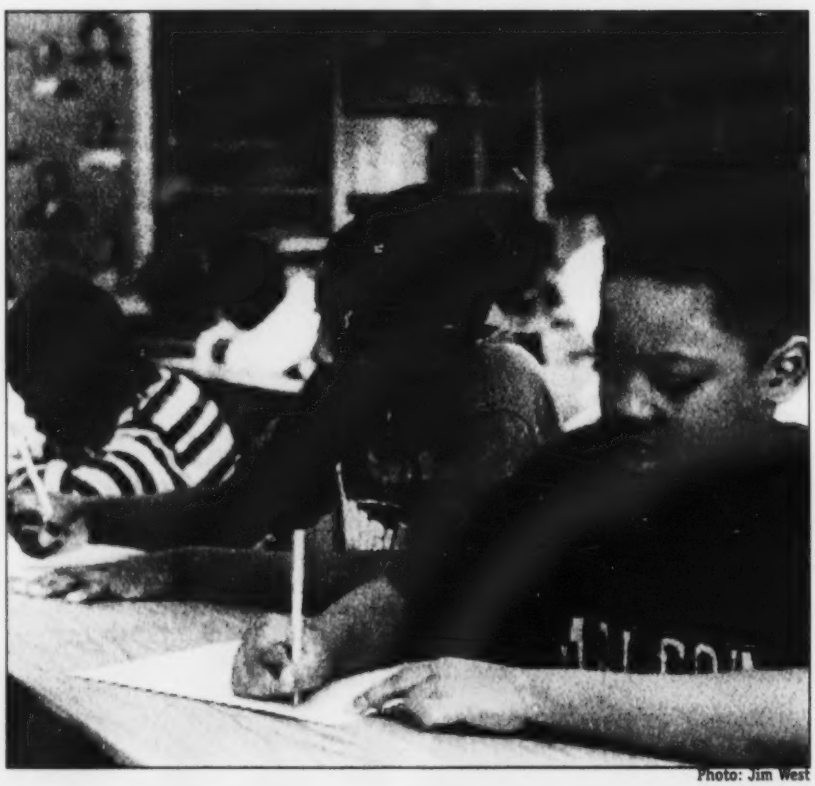


Photo: Jim West

private schools frequently discriminate against applicants based on income, prior academic achievement, race, religion, or other factors. By providing a justification for school privatization, high-stakes tests make quality education inaccessible and unaffordable, especially to low-income students and students of color.

STANDARDIZED TESTING: A WISE USE OF TAX DOLLARS?

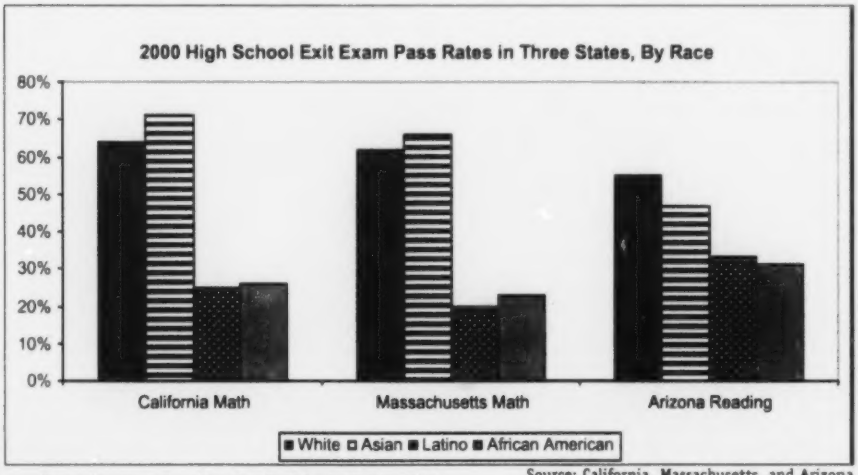
Rather than leveling the playing field for students of color, testing widens the racial achievement gap while kicking millions of federal and state dollars to testing companies. The federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 2001 mandates a major expansion in testing. Meanwhile, US Bancorp estimates that President Bush's education plan will more than triple the $300 million annual testing market, while the National Association of State Boards of Education estimates that these new testing mandates will cost as much as $7 billion.[12] This explosive growth in the testing market is already having a huge impact on state budgets, as state testing expenditures will grow to approximately $400 million this year alone. California spends the most ($44 million a year), followed by Texas ($26 million), Florida ($22.4 million), Massachusetts ($20 million), Indiana ($19 million), Virginia ($17.9 million), and Maryland ($17.1 million).[13] The money that Maryland spends on testing each year, for example, could put a well-trained teacher into 413 schools, or nearly three credentialed teachers in every high school in the state.[14] Instead, this money goes to private testing companies like McGraw-Hill, who last year signed a $30 million testing contract in Kentucky and a $29.4 million contract in Mississippi, a state with one of the lowest per-pupil expenditures in the nation.[15] These big businesses may be the only winners from high-stakes testing, at the expense of public school students of color.

HIGH-STAKES TESTS PRODUCE RACIST OUTCOMES

Due to pre-existing inequalities in our education system, students of color and low-income students are less prepared for the tests that increasingly determine their ability to graduate and go to college. Twenty-nine states are implementing high school exit exams.

Arizona has postponed the effective date of their exam to 2006 due to its low pass rates. If Massachusetts and California move forward with the exam, less than 30 percent of African American and Latino students will be eligible for a diploma. Moreover, because test results are linked to rewards or sanctions, school administrators often inflate the scores by forcing grade repetition, shunting students into special education programs, or encouraging students to drop out. Since the inception of Texas' high school exit exam in 1990, African American and Latino students have been increasingly forced to repeat grades, such that

cumulative rates of retention are almost twice as high for students of color as for white students.[18] In that same period, fewer than 60 percent of students of color have progressed from grade 9 to high school graduation. As the chart shows, Latino and African American students are much less likely to pass exit exams than white students. High-stakes testing leaves thousands and eventually millions of students of color far behind their white counterparts in the attainment of academic qualifications that are so critical in today's economy.



Source: California, Massachusetts, and Arizona Departments of Education

CONCLUSION

High school diplomas and college degrees are prerequisites to success in today's job market. Adults without high school diplomas are twice as likely to be unemployed as people with high school degrees and nearly four times as likely as people with college degrees. More troubling is that only 6.8 percent of African American high-school dropouts working full-time earn wages above the poverty line.[19] High-stakes tests not only perpetuate the racist notions upon which they were created and exacerbate existing educational inequalities, they also create a barrier to educational attainment that traps low-income students and students of color in cycles of poverty. The extraordinary resources and time spent on standardized testing each year are not only wasted, but further tilt the playing field to the profound detriment of people of color.

SOUTHEAST ASIAN AMERICAN STUDENTS AND THE MODEL MINORITY MYTH

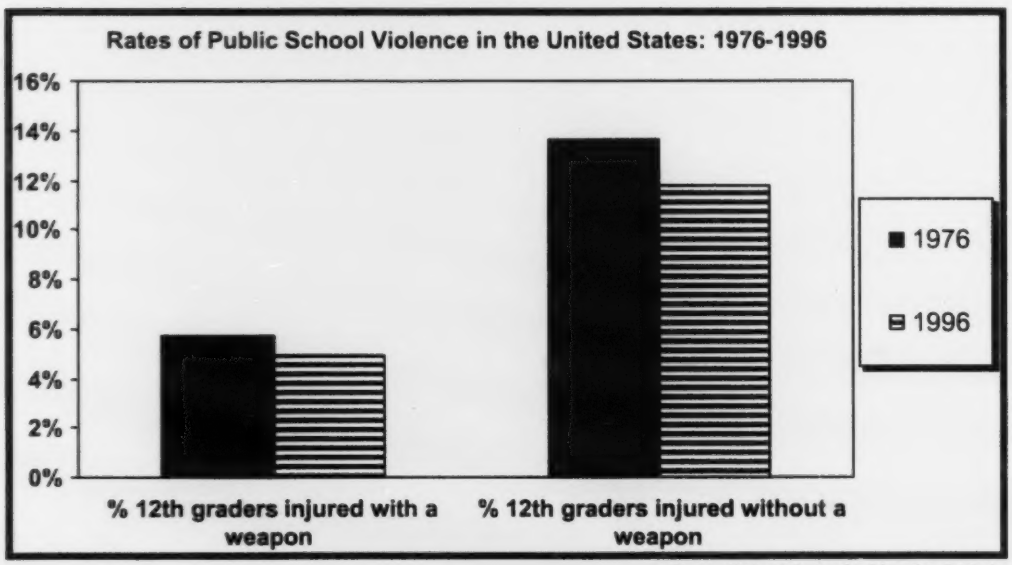
Most data gathered by government agencies cluster Asian American students together irrespective of ethnicity or nation of origin. Consequently, many measures of educational success indicate that as a whole Asian American students are faring quite well, and in some cases even better than white students. Statistics often do not tell the whole story. As Max Niedzwiecki, director of programs and resource development for the Southeast Asian Resource Action Center, points out, "[Many people] believe Asian Americans are highly educated, overrepresented in higher education, and that the problem is solved. That's not true with Southeast Asian-American education." Research shows that while 23 percent of the total Asian American population has less than a high school degree, the same is true for 64 percent of Southeast Asian Americans.[16] After the Vietnam War many Southeast Asian refugees were resettled into working class neighborhoods with resource-starved schools, and their education has suffered as a result.[17] Clearly, Southeast Asian American students are also being failed by the public education system.

ZERO TOLERANCE AND MAXIMUM-SECURITY SCHOOLS

There are many misconceptions about the prevalence of youth violence in our society and it is important to peel back the veneer of hot-tempered discourse that often surrounds the issue....In the case of youth violence, it is important to note that, statistically speaking, schools are among the safest places for children to be.

Congressional Working Group on Youth Violence[20]

Recent incidents of school shootings have resulted in an increased fear of and for youth by the public-igniting a proliferation of policies aimed at improving school safety. The Gun Free Schools Act (GFSA) was signed into law in 1994 and mandates a one-year expulsion for any student who brings a firearm to school. As a result, school districts have also invested significant resources in security measures such as video surveillance cameras and increased police presence on school grounds. These policies, while seemingly well intentioned, have failed to improve school safety and student achievement. Instead, students of color are suspended and expelled at increasing rates, often for nonviolent and subjectively defined "offenses." And at schools attended predominantly by youth of color, students struggle to learn in prison-like environments. The outcomes of these policies indicate that race continues to be a determining factor in whether or not a student is placed on the prison track.



Source: National Center for Education Statistics

We all want students to be safe at school, but zero tolerance policies and maximum-security schools represent extreme and ineffective approaches to achieving this goal. It is also important to keep the problem of school violence in perspective: rates of school violence have not changed significantly since 1976.

DISCIPLINE POLICIES THAT PUSH YOUTH OF COLOR OUT OF SCHOOL

Zero tolerance is a perverse version of mandatory sentencing, first, because it takes no account of what we know about child and adolescent development, and second, because at least in the criminal justice system...when mandatory sentences exist, there are different mandatory sentences for offenses of different seriousness.

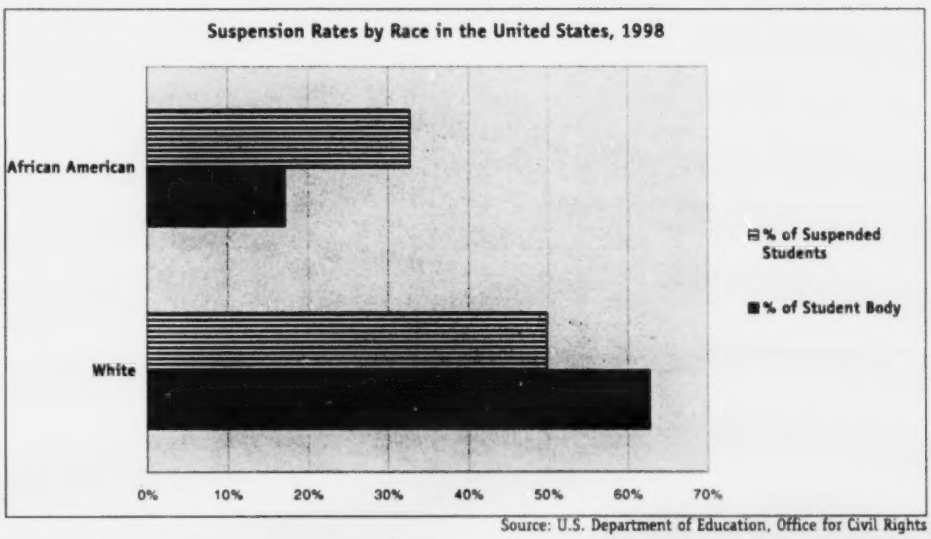
American Bar Association
Zero Tolerance Report[21]

Generation Y found that 75 percent of respondents would prefer more counselors and nurses instead of more security guards.

Although the Gun Free Schools Act mandates expulsion for the possession of firearms, many school districts have expanded the policy beyond its original scope. As Carlos Montelongo, student at Hubbard High School and member of Generation Y in Chicago, sums up, "When Zero Tolerance was started, it was mainly to respond to students bringing drugs, weapons, and other illegal objects to schools. Now children are being punished for minor reasons. Kids are getting suspended for not going to class, for being late to class, or just laughing in class."[22]

At the national level, during the 1996–97 school year, 94 percent of U.S. public schools had zero tolerance policies for weapons and firearms, 87 percent had them for alcohol, 88 percent for drugs, and 79 percent for fighting or tobacco.[23]

Students of color are often subjected to racial stereotyping when it comes to school discipline. African American students in particular are suspended and expelled at disproportionate rates to their white counterparts, and in many cases are punished more severely for less serious and more subjectively defined infractions.[24] In 1998 while African American students comprised 17.1 percent of the US student population, they represented 32.7 percent of suspended students nationally. That same year



Source: U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights

White students comprised 62.7 percent of all students, but accounted for 49.8 percent of those suspended.[25]

Students of color often receive harsher punishments than white students for the same "offense." In Bell County, Kentucky, for example, a white student was dared by his friends to pick a fight with an African American student. He then approached an African American student, called him a "nigger" and struck him. Despite the fact that both students were fighting, the African American youth was suspended for two weeks, while the white youth was suspended for only one. The administration justified its decision by saying that the African American student continued to fight after the white student stopped, with no consideration of the racial harassment and provocation on the part of the white student.[26]

INSTITUTIONAL RACISM IN DISCIPLINE: ONE STUDENT'S EXPERIENCE IN SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA

One course can make or break a student's success in that subject, and as a result, affect her or his success in school as a whole. Yet when Esmeralda Perez and her classmates faced an abusive teacher whose racist comments and misuse of discipline affected their learning, their school administration simply told them to "wait it out."

Esmeralda, a San Diego 9th grader, experienced her geometry teacher frequently making Mexican American students stand outside the classroom as a form of punishment. When Mexican Americans asked questions, she would either not answer or "make students feel like they couldn't do the work." When a fight broke out between a Latino student and a white student, the teacher made sure that only the Latino student was punished despite the numerous witnesses who saw that both students were at fault.

The discipline practices of this teacher were accepted by the administration despite counselors' awareness of serious incidents of abusive and racist treatment. The lack of action on the part of the administration severely impacted some students' academic work. Three out of the six Mexican American students in the course received a failing grade. The students who were kicked out by the teacher were required to retake algebra, a class they had already completed, because no other geometry teachers were available. Fortunately for Esmeralda, she passed and was able to go on to the next course.

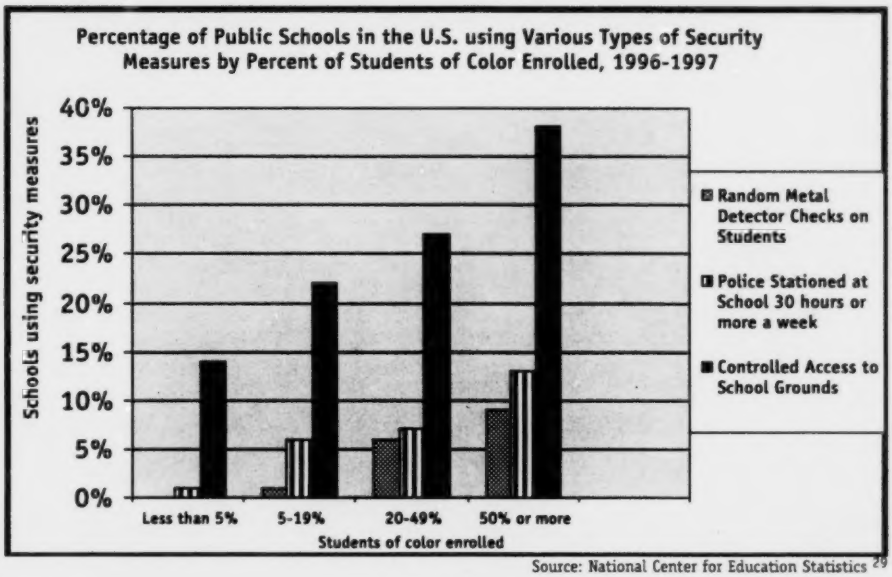
Latino students, who represent 38.8 percent of the San Diego Unified School District student body, are expelled more frequently than any other racial group, a problem that Esmeralda blames on the severe teacher shortage-especially of Spanish-speaking teachers. "Instead of talking to students who misbehave, teachers suspend them right away," says Esmeralda. "Just because the students aren't able to speak English, the teachers don't try to deal with problems; they just suspend."[27]

MAXIMUM-SECURITY SCHOOLS FOR YOUTH OF COLOR

Design and staffing of schools are driven by security concerns, but no thought is given to how well these designs and atmospheres make students and [teachers] feel. If we use prisons as our models for safe schools-well, prisons are not safe places, right?

Pedro Noguera
Professor of Education
Harvard University[28]

With locked campuses, on-site police officers, and random metal detector checks, students of color are struggling to learn in maximum-security schools. Schools with high concentrations of students of color are more likely to use strict security measures than schools that predominantly serve white students.



Source: National Center for Education Statistics [29]

Chicago Public Schools spent $35,189,663 on school security services in 2000–01.[31]

Case in Point: Albuquerque Public School (APS) police officers recently began carrying Taser stun guns on school grounds, while leaving their shotguns in their patrol cars. Prior to the 2000–2001 school year, APS police officers were armed with Mace and police batons. The district's police department requested $123,700 in order to pay for the new equipment. Students of color make up 57 percent of the APS student body.[30]

Zero tolerance policies and excessive security measures put students of color at an academic disadvantage to their white counterparts, and as a consequence large numbers of youth of color fall behind, become frustrated and drop out of school entirely. Research has shown that high school sophomores who dropped out of school were three times more likely to have been suspended than those who stayed in school.[32]

SCHOOLS AND THE PRISON TRACK

We are tracking one group of kids from kindergarten to prison, and we are tracking one group of kids from kindergarten to college.

Lani Guiner
Professor of Law
Harvard University[34]

Between 1980 and 2000, per capita spending on schools in the U.S. increased by 32 percent while per capita spending on prisons increased by 189 percent. As communities of color organize to improve the quality of education available to them, they are simultaneously resisting the mass incarceration of people of color. An examination of the disproportionate incarceration rates for Latinos and African Americans in the U.S. links the lack of quality education available to youth of color with their increased likelihood of being targeted by the criminal justice system. In 2000, whites constituted 70 percent of the U.S. population but accounted for only 35 percent of the prison population. In contrast, African Americans represented 12 percent of the U.S. population but comprised 47 percent of the prison population. The figures for Latinos were 13 percent and 16 percent, respectfully.[35]

Photo: Bernard Kleina

CONCLUSION

The public education system in the United States unfairly punishes and fails millions of students of color every year. Although ensuring student safety should continue to be a high priority, superficial and politically profitable educational reforms, such as zero tolerance policies and extreme security measures, have done little to improve school safety or the academic achievement of students of color. Instead, these policies have exacerbated racial inequities in education by profiling and unfairly punishing youth of color. If we are to truly address the racial achievement gap, students of color must be given a fair chance to succeed.

PROVEN SOLUTIONS: HIGH-QUALITY AND DIVERSE TEACHERS IN SMALL SCHOOLS

Unlike zero tolerance and high-stakes testing programs that expose and exacerbate racial inequities, policies that address teaching quality, teacher diversity, and class size reduction have been qualitatively and quantitatively proven to reduce the racial achievement gap. Implemented correctly, such programs can level the playing field for students of color while raising the quality of education for all.

TEACHER QUALITY

> *"Teacher education is so important. My coursework helped me develop culturally competent practices, which I need in my multi-racial and bilingual classroom. Even though I am already certified, I can see the difference that good professional training in curriculum design, new teaching methods, and classroom organization have on my ability to effectively teach my students."*
>
> —5th grade teacher
> Phoenix, Arizona[36]

One way to bridge the racial achievement gap is to provide equal and universal access to quality teachers. Students perform better in schools with more fully certified teachers, and achievement rises fastest when teachers receive high-quality training. In fact, teacher education, experience, and expertise are *the most significant* factors in student performance, outweighing race, income, or parental education level.[37] Despite the obvious importance of teacher education, however, one out of every four new teachers nationwide enters the profession on an emergency or substandard license. This shortage of certified teachers exacerbates pre-existing inequalities because undercredentialed teachers disproportionately end up in large urban areas with the highest concentrations of people of color, low-income students, and students whose first language is not English.[38] Increasing the supply of new qualified teachers and creating incentives for staying in underperforming schools are critical to bridging the gap in teacher quality. Meanwhile, professional development for veteran teachers can also improve student achievement. A recent study commissioned by the U.S. Education Department shows that progress for 3rd, 4th, and 5th graders was 20 percent

higher in reading and 50 percent higher in math when teachers gave high ratings to professional training programs.[39]

Despite the evidence, President Bush's education plan pays lip service to teacher education while advancing a budget proposal that slashes teacher quality enhancement funds in favor of aggressive funding for testing programs. The president's plan proposes to increase student evaluation funds by $69 million to $105 million dollars annually. Meanwhile, his proposal cuts the Teacher Quality Enhancement budget by $44 million, to a meager $54 million annually. This would cut nearly in half the funding for partnerships between universities and high-need school districts to strengthen teacher education, such as ensuring knowledge of academic content, ensuring that teachers are well prepared for the realities of the classroom, and preparing teachers to work effectively with diverse students.40 Bush's budget priorities exacerbate existing educational inequalities, rather than leveling the playing field for students of color.

Too often politicians prioritize testing, privatization, or discipline, and squander an opportunity to improve education for all students. Where teacher quality has been a priority, however, the results have been dramatic. Connecticut became the top state in the nation for reading and math by addressing teacher quality with system-wide reform efforts. Connecticut established the following priorities:

- **Strong teacher education,** ensuring that all teachers know their content and effective teaching methods-including the teaching of reading-as well as how to address the needs of special education students, English language learners, and others with specific learning needs.
- **Competitive salaries for fully qualified teachers** and more equal allocation of teaching resources across districts.
- **Incentives to eliminate the hiring of unqualified teachers,** including phasing out emergency permits and waivers and reallocating funds to allow districts to compete in the market for well-qualified teachers and to reward the hiring of qualified individuals.
- **Expanded scholarships and forgivable loans** that support the preparation of prospective teachers, especially for shortage fields and high-need locations.
- **Targeted incentives to improve working conditions** (smaller pupil loads, more shared planning and professional development time, more adequate teaching resources, more personalized school designs, and stronger mentoring) in hard-to-staff schools.
- **Mentoring for all beginning teachers,** so that they become competent and stay in teaching.

Like these Connecticut reforms, educational support for teachers has been the cornerstone of successful reform efforts in North Carolina and Ohio as well. Programs in these states have been able to increase the supply of teachers of color,

increase the number of teachers in shortage fields such as math and science, reduce attrition rates for new teachers by more than two-thirds, and help teachers become competent more quickly.[41]

TEACHER DIVERSITY

When Marion Malcolm of Springfield Alliance for Equality and Respect first saw Springfield, Oregon's 75 new teachers, she was dismayed. Despite years of advocating for teacher diversity, she saw only two new hires who were visibly people of color. Particularly distressing to Malcolm, however, was the district's recent hesitancy to hire a fully credentialed Latino teacher based on questions about his immigration status. Federal anti-discrimination laws should have protected this teacher from the district's inquiries, but even this would have little impact on the unequal proportion of teachers of color in the district. Malcolm is leading the charge to target the University of Oregon's College of Education, the source of most teachers in the district, for its failure to attract and educate potential teachers of color.

A survey conducted by Milwaukee Catalyst revealed that 78 percent of respondents agree that investing in high-quality teachers is the most important thing schools can do.

As the links between teacher diversity and student performance become stronger, we can see that it is crucial to have fully qualified teachers. Bridging the racial achievement gap also requires policies that facilitate the recruitment and retention of teachers of color. Years of studies suggest that teachers of color are important—both for students of color and for white students. Scholars have identified several key reasons why students of color stay in school longer and achieve more when they have teachers who look like themselves. These include:

The role model effect: Teachers of color are proven to provide students of color with invaluable examples of successful, respected adults.[42] More particularly, teachers of color provide models of success in the academic arena, where students of color are often expected to fail. Of course, students of color are not the only ones to benefit from a diverse teaching corps. White students also derive important lessons when their role models include teachers of color.

Better performance on reading and math tests: A recent study published by the National Bureau of Economic Research has found that students of color and white students alike score higher on exams when they are taught by teachers who share their racial background. The study found that students who had a teacher of their own race for at least one of the four years of the study scored 3 to 4 percentile points higher on standardized reading and math tests than peers who had teachers of different races. The race effects were particularly strong among low- income students, students with inexperienced teachers, and students of color in highly segregated schools.[43]

Teacher retention: Teachers of color are more likely than white teachers to continue teaching at hard-to-staff urban schools, where teacher turnover is a major barrier to quality education.[44]

Cultural relevance: Teachers who share their students' culture and life experiences bring extra knowledge to the classroom about those students, which they can use to fashion teaching that works. They also serve as cultural mediators among school, parents, and community. Teachers are much more likely to reach out, and to reach out successfully, to parents with whom they feel "at home" culturally. This mediation function has special salience in communities where many parents do not speak English. A teacher who speaks the parents' language and has shared life experience can help draw them into their children's education. That parental involvement is a crucial component of academic success.

The positive benefits of a diverse teaching staff are abundant. Nevertheless, both students of color and white students are unlikely to be taught by teachers of color. Forty-two percent of all public schools in the U.S. have no teachers of color. While students of color make up 33 percent of all public school enrollment, teachers of color make up just 13 percent of all teachers. Moreover, within the next few years, the percentage of teachers of color is expected to fall to 5 percent while the percentage of students of color will rise to 41 percent. While both white students and students of color lose when the teaching pool is homogenous, students of color in several cities are particularly impacted by the mismatch. For example, 5 percent of the teachers in Providence, Rhode Island are Latino, as compared to almost 50 percent of the student body. Los Angeles also has a striking disparity, with only 22 percent of the teacher corps and 69 percent of the student body being Latino.[45]

Photo: Jim West

It is time to focus on the fundamentals and turn our attention to what works-reforms that can yield both short-term and long-lasting results. We need first-rate teacher training programs that produce skilled teachers equipped to meet the challenges and tap the richness of today's racially, culturally, linguistically and developmentally diverse classrooms. We also need to find a way to attract highly skilled teachers to the highest-need schools, and ensure that there are incentives for them to stay. Once we address the crisis in teacher quantity and quality, we can then begin to make headway in reducing class size, which depends on the availability of more teaching staff.

SMALL SCHOOLS AND CLASSES

A program in Wisconsin is proving that individual attention through class size reduction can improve education for all, while bridging racial achievement gaps. Since 1996, Wisconsin has implemented the Student Achievement Guarantee in Education (SAGE) program. Using funding targeted to 1st through 3rd grade classrooms, which have high populations of students who are eligible for the free lunch program, SAGE has successfully boosted student achievement. The racial achievement gap at SAGE schools is smaller than at schools where class size has not been significantly reduced. Moreover, African American 3rd grade SAGE students performed significantly higher than their counterparts at other schools.[46]

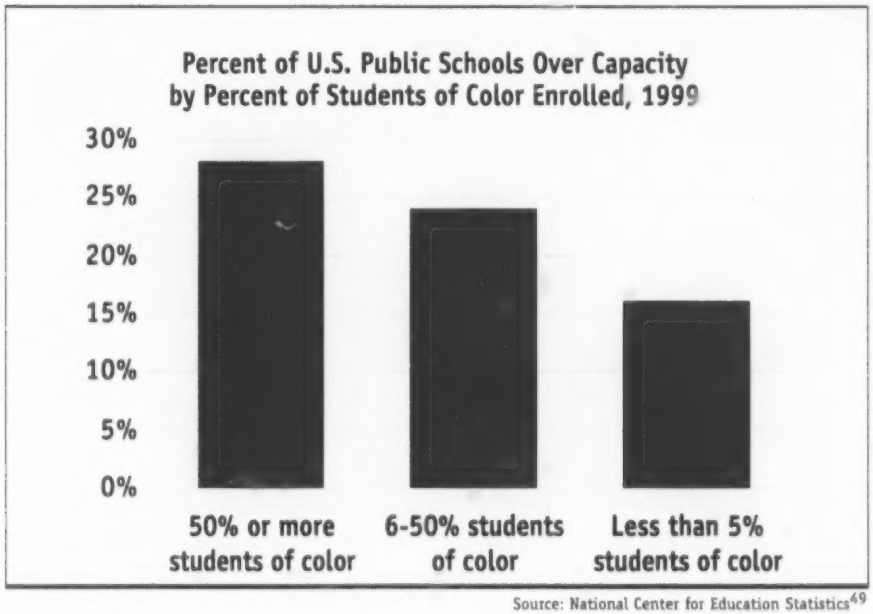
Wisconsin is not the only state to prove that all students, but particularly students of color, benefit from reduced class size. In the 1980s, Tennessee began a longitudinal study that randomly assigned students from 80 different schools into different size classrooms, and found that the greatest gains on the Stanford Test were made by students in small classes. Test scores for students of color improved even more dramatically in small classrooms, indicating that small class size in early grades may effectively reduce the achievement gap. Last year, a follow-up study revealed that these students of color continued to reap benefits after leaving the small classrooms by posting higher scores on college entrance exams.[47]

Wisconsin can be seen as a model for class size reduction largely because the SAGE program has prioritized overcrowded, underperforming, low-income schools over affluent suburban districts. This implementation strategy avoids two problems with class size reduction that other states, such as California, have experienced. California attempted to fund the reduction in class size to 20 students with a flat per-student reimbursement, which did not account for the higher per-student costs of the reduction at schools whose pre-existing class size was larger. As a result, the program did not account for pre-existing inequalities in large urban schools of color. Secondly, while California's class size reduction program showed modest gains in student performance, it also resulted in a sharp decrease in the proportion of fully credentialed teachers, particularly in schools with low-income students and more students of color. Because both low-income schools and affluent schools were simultaneously decreasing class size, the resulting teacher vacancies led to the transfer of credentialed teachers from underperforming schools to high performing schools. Implemented in this fashion, without incentives for teachers to remain in underperforming schools, class size reduction actually exacerbates inequalities and widens the racial achievement gap.[48] Fashioned properly, however, class size reduction can go a long way towards leveling the educational playing field for students of color.

Despite its benefits, politicians have balked at class size reduction because of its potential costs, leaving thousands of students of color in overcrowded classrooms where individual instruction is unlikely if not impossible. Statistics from the

Department of Education statistics indicate that students of color are 1.7 times more likely than white students to be in an overcrowded school.

Schools with a majority of students of color are 3.7 times more likely to be severely overcrowded (more than 25 percent over capacity) than schools with less than 5 percent students of color. The following chart highlights the unequal opportunities for students of color when it comes to school size:



Source: National Center for Education Statistics[49]

While we know that small schools and classes can reduce the racial achievement gap, students of color are disproportionately trapped in overcrowded schools and few states have demonstrated the political will to change the situation.

A more serious focus on improving teacher quality and reducing school and class size will not solve all of the problems in public schools. But investment in these proposals will begin to address racial inequities in our schools. The current configuration of school reform sets up students of color for failure. State and federal policy priorities that emphasize punishment not only have racist outcomes, but become an excuse to ignore the core causes systemic failures. By redirecting priorities to proven reforms, we can tackle the fundamental problems of school quality and equity, and take a dramatic leap forward in school improvement for all.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The concept of racial profiling in education policy is not new. The very premise of the Brown v. Board of Education decision of 1954 was based on the realization that race was a determining factor in who receives quality education in the United States. Nearly 50 years later, we face the reality that education policy continues to single out students of color for disparate treatment. The negative consequences of high-stakes tests and militarized schools seem to be reserved for children of a darker hue. To replace these misguided policies with racial equity and academic excellence we recommend the following:

- **Eliminate Exit Exams:** Blaming students for pre-existing systemic inequities is unacceptable. Denying students their earned diploma based on a single test score is not fair nor is it an effective means of raising academic achievement. Those responsible for the conditions that create racial disparities must be held accountable—from superintendents to governors, from principals to presidents.

- **Repeal Zero Tolerance Policies:** Many schools and school districts have taken zero tolerance policies far beyond the narrow federal mandates. Local policies that include subjective parameters for suspending and expelling students must be scaled back to the original federal guidelines. In addition, school leaders must rededicate themselves to creating an environment that is conducive to learning and that nurtures the unique potential of all students.

- **Refocus Our Priorities:** How a policy is implemented is just as important as its content. Therefore policy makers must recognize that all students do not start out on a level playing field and that a sustained history of institutional racism has marred education reform. To remedy this situation, schools and districts that serve high-need student populations (usually students of color, low-income students, and language minority students) should be prioritized to receive equitable resources. This would allow us to invest in authentic reforms that have proven track records in reducing the racial achievement gap. We can start by providing every student with a fully certified, highly skilled math, science and English teacher. Creating new small schools and reducing class size will make public schools places where all students are valued and are actively engaged in the learning process. These reforms are possible only if decision makers have the political will to implement them.

- **Racial Equity Report Cards:** The racial and economic consequences of current and proposed education policy must be fully assessed by means of thorough data collection, disaggregated by race, ethnicity and income. By publicly releasing annual Racial Equity Report Cards, policy makers can base their decisions on high-caliber research with full consideration of potential racist outcomes.

Contrary to political rhetoric, it is not fair or effective to reduce the complexity of skills and talents that all youth possess to a single test score. Nor is it excusable to throw away huge numbers of youth to the prison industrial complex. If this nation is to live up to the ideals of freedom and democracy that it espouses, then we must confront issues of race directly. Simply put, it means that we must take up the challenge to provide every child with a quality public education. Not one is expendable.

ESSAYS

Horace Had It Right: The Stakes are Still High for Students of Color

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The first time that I read Horace Mann Bond's 1924 essay, "Intelligence Tests and Propaganda," it was as an object of historical curiosity. I knew that he was the first Black president of Lincoln University, a historically Black school, and that, remarkably, at the age of 19, he was already directing the School of Education at Langston University. I also knew that this was Bond's first published article.

What I didn't know was how accurately this essay would foretell the late-20th-century climate of high-stakes testing and its impact on the lives of children of color. Bond warned of the increasing reliance on intelligence tests"—their applications today amount to a fervor"—and the growing emphasis on their study and application in teacher colleges and other institutions of higher learning.

In principle, Bond didn't have anything against tests themselves. His argument was with the interpretation of the tests, and what he considered to be misuse beyond their original intent, to support the notion of "Nordic superiority." Noting that the emerging group of Educational Psychologists appeared to be following in the philosophical footsteps of earlier scientific racists, Bond urged "every Negro student" to learn "every detail of the operation, use and origin of these tests" in order to counter the racist outcomes of their application.

Among other flaws, Bond noted that the tests were biased against African American and Mexican American children. He argued that the tests measured preparation, not ability, and unfairly applied the same standard to affluent children and poor children. The "environmental factor" was a key issue for Bond. Even within the race, he insisted, disparities between northern and southern students could be attributed to the low level of funding in segregated southern schools, and he offered his own research among Lincoln University students to support that claim.

He cautioned that the proliferation of standardized tests and the subsequent ranking of students (he later called it "a major indoor sport among psychologists") had the "capacity for untold harm"[50] to African American students.

Horace had it right: High-stakes have come to pose a significant threat to the aspirations of not only African American students, but to students of color as a whole.

THE MASSACHUSETTS COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

Like other high-stakes standardized tests around the country, the 2000 Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) once again confirmed what we already knew: that with few exceptions, the wealthiest, whitest school districts will outperform poor urban communities with large concentrations of people of color on standardized tests.

Sprawling suburban towns like Dover, Weston and Wellesley, where the population is mostly white and the average cost of a single-family home is upwards of half-a-million dollars, consistently rank in the top 10 percent of MCAS-takers.

In contrast, Lawrence, one of the poorest towns in the state, where nearly 60 percent of the population identify as Hispanic or Latino, hovers near the bottom of the scale.

Massachusetts is one of 29 states that tie high-stakes tests to high school graduation. Under a controversial mandate, 10th grade students must pass the MCAS in four subject areas in order to graduate, beginning with the class of 2003.

According to the Massachusetts Department of Education (MDOE), African American students in this first group failed in alarming numbers: Sixty-one percent of 10th graders scored at the failing level on the English Language Arts test, while 26 percent were just above failing, 12 percent attained a "proficient" score, and just 1 percent scored at the advanced level. Seventy percent failed the Science and Technology test and 77 percent failed the Mathematics test.[51] Although results are not provided for the 10th grade History and Social Sciences test (perhaps due to widespread criticism of test content), 8th grade scores reveal a similar pattern: more than three quarters failed, while *none* scored at the "advanced" level and only 1 percent scored at the "proficient" level.

2000 MCAS Results by Race/Ethnicity

	ADVANCED	PROFICIENT	NEEDS IMPROVEMENT	FAILING
African American				
ELA	1	12	26	61
Science/ Technology	0	5	24	70
Math	2	7	14	77
History/SS (8)	0	1	23	76
Asian American/Pacific Islander				
ELA	9	29	29	34
Science/ Technology	4	26	34	30
Math	26	21	20	34
History/SS (8)	2	15	42	41
Hispanic/Latino				
ELA	1	9	24	66
Science/ Technology	0	4	22	74
Math	2	5	14	80
History/SS (8)	0	1	16	82
Native American				
ELA	1	13	21	65
Science/ Technology	0	12	23	65
Math	8	7	18	67
History/SS (8)	0	3	26	71
White				
ELA	11	38	31	27
Science/ Technology	3	27	40	30
Math	17	21	24	38
History/SS (8)	1	11	51	38

Source: Massachusetts Department of Education

Scores for Latino students were even more dismal: Sixty-six percent of tenth graders failed English, 74 percent failed Science and Technology, and 80 percent failed Math. Among eighth graders, 82 percent failed History and Social Sciences. Native Americans, who comprise less than 4 percent of all 10th graders tested, scored only slightly better than African American students.

While overall, Asian American students appear to be doing about as well as white students-and better than white students in math-the figures don't tell the whole story. Although the MDOE doesn't disaggregate Asian students by language or country of origin, a worrisome pattern emerges from the state demographics: Lowell, Boston, and Worcester, the cities with the highest concentration of Southeast Asian students, are among the lowest performing districts.

DROPOUTS: IF IT'S GOOD ENOUGH FOR TEXAS...

Massachusetts officials deny that any racial bias exists in the MCAS. While admitting that in the beginning, "a major gap existed," the Department of Education cites the shining example of Texas—a state with six of the worst 14 graduation rates in the country—to demonstrate that "if you stay with it, the current gap closes."[52]

In 1998, eight years after Texas began implementing its Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS), the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund (MALDEF) charged that only 40 percent of Mexican American and African American students passed the test, while white students passed at a rate of about 70 percent. Further, Mexican American and African American students "represent 85 percent of the 7,650 students who fail the final administration of the TAAS each year."[53]

In a recent article, teacher activist Stan Karp notes that:

> *...fewer than 60 percent of the African-American and Latino kids who begin 9th grade in a Texas public high school make it to graduation. This strategy of "losing" large numbers of Black and Latino students is one of the main ways [Texas] "closed the achievement gap."*[54]

In the last four years, drop out rates have risen for all students of color in Massachusetts, most significantly for Latinos, while there has been a slight *decrease* for white students.[55] Education Commissioner David Driscoll has denied any connection to the MCAS graduation requirement, saying, "People want to blame MCAS for anything." Yet according to the Massachusetts-based advocacy group FairTest, none of the ten states with the lowest dropout rates tie graduation to high-stakes tests, while nine of the ten states with the highest dropout rates do.[56]

MCAS AND COLLEGE ADMISSIONS

The MCAS graduation requirement also has major implications for many students who would otherwise expect to attend college.

In June, 2001 the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education shelved plans to make MCAS scores a requirement for entrance to state colleges and universities. Admissions officers at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst (the state's most selective public university) were among the plan's critics, charging that it would "decimate" enrollments of African American, Latino, and recent immigrant students. In fact, said Joe Marshall, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Enrollment Services, "We're trying to get away from tests like the SAT."[57]

In contrast, on the same day as the Board's decision, the President of Fitchburg State College announced that any Massachusetts students who score in the "advanced" level of the math and English sections of the MCAS will be offered $2000 scholarships toward their tuition and fees.[58]

Although the measure failed to pass this time, strong support from Governor Jane Swift, members of the Board itself, and other state officials means that it will probably resurface. Arguing that admissions standards at the state schools have become "too rigid," Board Chairman Stephen Tocco touted the MCAS as "another tool to measure knowledge" that would lessen the likelihood of "miss[ing] the potential of kids who would be very good college students."

A number of educators argue that the MCAS will have just the opposite effect.

Described as "a school of mostly inner-city kids," Fenway High is one of nine "Pilots" whose mission is to "'experiment' with innovative ideas in quality instruction that can be replicated in other Boston public schools. African American students make up almost half of the Fenway's population, and Latino students account for more than one quarter.

Nine out of 10 Fenway graduates were accepted into colleges this past year, but according to principal Larry Myatt, about 70 percent wouldn't have graduated if passing the MCAS had been a requirement.

A nearly identical picture emerges in Randolph, a working-class suburb south of Boston, where close to 21 percent of the residents are Black and 10 percent are Asian American. Although 90 percent of the class of 2001 got into two- or four-year colleges, including Ivy League schools and other competitive institutions, two-thirds of the class failed the MCAS math test.[59]

State officials are unmoved by such evidence. Commissioner Driscoll said he found it "very hard to believe kids are failing MCAS and getting into college. Our statistics show the kids who fail MCAS are failing otherwise." Myatt counters that colleges are beginning to recognize that tests such as the MCAS do not measure "creativity, teamwork, research skills and lots of other ways to show your learning."

TESTING THE TESTS

Like Driscoll, MDOE defends the validity of the MCAS by charging that students who fail the test "typically score in the bottom quarter on other national tests," and that the MCAS "correlates with other longstanding tests." Considering the breadth and depth of criticism leveled at such tests—including the SAT, the "gold standard" in standardized tests—that argument rings a bit hollow, especially as it relates to students of color. As Charles Willie, Professor Emeritus at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, often quips to African American audiences, "Once you know what the dominant group knows, they change the test on you!"

Jay Rosner, executive director of the Princeton Review Foundation, would most certainly agree. He calls the SAT "a white preference test."[60] Rosner reviewed all 580 math and verbal test questions on the 1988 and 1989 SATs. He found that 575 of those questions were answered correctly more often by whites than by African Americans. In contrast, African Americans correctly answered only one question more often than whites.

For those same 580 questions, Latinos got 11 correct more often than whites, while whites answered 566 questions correctly more often. Rosner insists that much of the achievement gap could be eliminated by limiting the questions with the largest racial gap.

Yet "fixing" the tests doesn't fix what parents, educators, and activists see as the real issue: closing the achievement gap by raising the quality of instruction and other resources in the lowest-performing schools.

HIGH STANDARDS, NOT STANDARDIZATION

Ironically, the MCAS is the culmination of what was once considered a promising measure, the Massachusetts Education Reform Act of 1993, which calls for greater and more equitable funding to schools, accountability for student learning, and statewide standards for students, educators, schools and districts.

The MDOE admitted in July 2001 that it lacks the capacity to help local districts implement the provisions of the Reform Act.[61] No wonder, considering the huge demands of managing the MCAS itself. James Peyser, chair of the State Board of Education and advisor to the Governor, says that "while the department has a role to play in helping districts improve, the lion's share rests with the teachers, principals and other educators in the field."

Yet the statewide Coalition for Authentic Reform in Education (CARE) charges that the state "has taken educational authority away from local communities and put it in the hands of the testing bureaucracy."[62]

Critics of MCAS say they aren't opposed to high standards, but to standardization—that this single, narrow tool has replaced the "multi-layered assessment system" called for in the Reform Act, a truly comprehensive system tied to

rigorous assessments of real student work. They argue that the MCAS, officially purported to be a tool for identifying which students and schools need help in particular academic areas, won't help schools improve the quality of teaching and learning. Instead, by forcing schools to focus their resources on test preparation, MCAS lessens the quality of instruction for those students most in need, and penalizes individual students by tying MCAS performance to graduation, promotion, and course placements.

State efforts have tended to focus on remediation—compulsory summer school, state-sponsored online tutoring programs, and one-on-one tutoring. In addition to calling for 20,000 volunteers, Governor Swift is seeking $5 million in state funds—much of which is likely to go to test preparation companies—to provide failing students with up to $1000 each for tutoring.[63] A spokesperson for the Governor vowed that "getting money into the classroom and to the students... will continue to be our focus as we go forward with education reform."[64]

Suppose that instead of spending $5 million on test prep tutoring—what columnist Derrick Z. Jackson compares to "trying to put out a fire after failing to install smoke detectors"—a comparable sum went into supporting innovative instructional strategies and greater professional development in schools where 70 percent of students of color failed the math test?

RESCUING EDUCATION REFORM

Bond urged us to become familiar with the tests and their application, to resist their misuse by employing "a certain degree of common sense as to their interpretation," and, by implication, to challenge the inequities inherent in the widely varying "environmental factors of modern urban life."

His observations and recommendations are not so different from those proffered by contemporary opponents of high stakes testing. CARE, the Massachusetts-based coalition, warns that:

> *The high-stakes burden of the MCAS will fall heavily on our most vulnerable students. The MCAS is likely to undermine, not enhance, equity for students of color, immigrant students, special needs students, and students from low-income families.*[65]

CARE urges all citizens to take a close, hard look at the MCAS; to resist its misuse; to employ more comprehensive and authentic forms of assessing student performance; and to use a broad range of information in assessing and improving schools, including such factors as the quality and upkeep of facilities, and the degree of physical and emotional safety.

Critical to CARE's plan for "rescuing education reform" is an idea that Horace Mann Bond could certainly get behind: support for existing programs that focus on learning, not testing.

Zero Tolerance and School Security Measures: A Failed Experiment

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Indiana University and University of Maryland

In the wake of a string of school shootings in suburban and rural neighborhoods, schools across the nation have begun to recognize that preventive planning for school safety is no longer a luxury, but an imperative. Yet in the absence of widespread knowledge of exactly what to do, many administrators and political leaders have sought quick-fix solutions sending the message that schools and communities are "tough" and "serious" about preventing violence.

Over time, however, we have found no evidence that simplistic and politically popular strategies really work in reducing school violence or improving student behavior, and in fact these approaches seem to be related to a host of negative outcomes, from poor school climate to an increased risk of delinquency. Unfortunately, as often happens in American society, the burden of those negative outcomes falls primarily on students of color and the poor. In this paper, we focus on the two strategies most often employed to send a message about school security: zero tolerance and school security measures.

ZERO TOLERANCE: THE FALLACY OF DISCIPLINARY REMOVAL

As fear of violence escalated in the late 1980's and early 90's, educators borrowed the term zero tolerance from drug enforcement to refer to the increased use of school suspension and expulsion for both serious and minor misbehavior. The Clinton Administration seemed to lend the blessing of the federal government by signing the Gun Free Schools Act in 1994, mandating a one-year expulsion for any student found with a firearm on school property.

From the start, zero tolerance has created controversy in communities. Students have been expelled or suspended for long periods for possession of nail-files, Midol, chains attached to Tweety Bird wallets, organic cough drops, and a 6" toy axe brought in as part of a firefighter's costume for Halloween. Advocacy groups ranging from Operation PUSH to the conservative Rutherford Institute have decried the arbitrariness of zero tolerance exclusions.

Yet although these extreme incidents of zero tolerance injustice capture our attention, the more important questions about zero tolerance have to do with its effects and effectiveness. Has zero tolerance worked in making schools safer? Is it fair to all students?

DOES ZERO TOLERANCE WORK?

As a result of zero tolerance policies, school suspension and expulsion have dramatically increased in many school districts. Yet after over ten years of implementation around the country, and five as federal policy, there is little to no convincing evidence that zero tolerance has improved either student behavior or overall school safety. In one national survey commissioned by the federal government, schools that reported using more components of a zero tolerance approach remained less safe than schools that used fewer such components.

In addition, there appear to be a number of negative effects of the use of suspension and expulsion. A high rate of repeat offending among students who have been suspended indicates that disciplinary removal is not a particularly effective method for changing behavior. In the long term, school suspension and expulsion may increase the risk for both school drop out and juvenile delinquency.

ZERO TOLERANCE AND RACIAL INEQUITIES

For over twenty-five years, the over-representation of students of color in school discipline has been a consistent finding. African American students are typically suspended at a rate 2–3 times that of other students. In some areas, there is also disproportionate discipline of Latino and Native American students. Students of color are also expelled and subjected to higher rates of corporal punishment than white students, and zero tolerance has in no way decreased this trend. Recent studies continue to find disproportionate treatment of students of color in school suspension and expulsion.

One can only wonder, given the consistency of this data for 25 years, why there has not been more attention paid to solving the problem. Perhaps administrators and policymakers assume that these inequities can be explained away by poverty status or increased levels of misbehavior: If this is primarily an issue of poverty, or if African American students act out more, then disproportionate discipline is not really bias. Yet statistical analyses find that racial differences in discipline remain even after controlling for income. Moreover, there is no evidence whatsoever that African American or other students of color exhibit higher rates of misbehavior that could explain their differential treatment. If anything, African Americans appear to be treated more harshly for less serious behavior; one study found that teacher referrals for African American students were more subjective than referrals for white students in the same schools.

CAN TECHNOLOGY REALLY KEEP SCHOOLS SECURE?

In response to Columbine and other school shootings, thousands of schools across the nation have devoted substantial resources to purchasing and installing school security technology, such as metal detectors and video cameras. Do such measures reduce violence and weapons carrying and make students more secure? The surprising answer is that we simply have no way of knowing. There has been virtually no empirical research on any school security measures.

Broad-scale evaluation of school security measures is beginning, however, and the results are not reassuring to schools that have spent thousands of dollars installing such systems. Preliminary evidence from a national study of school security, students' understanding of rules, and school violence suggests a relationship between levels of school violence and disciplinary practices. Schools characterized by metal detectors and security offices were reported to have higher rates of violence and disorder than those characterized by students' understanding of school rules and belief that rules were fairly enforced. In short, there is no evidence that approaches to prevention of school violence that rely on metal detectors and surveillance cameras are effective. In fact, some of the tragic shootings of students by students that have occurred in recent years occurred at schools with a range of "maximum security" devices in place.

RACIAL INEQUITIES IN SCHOOL SECURITY MEASURES

Although there is insufficient data to know whether school security technology can make a positive contribution to school safety in general, the misapplication of such measures has the potential for harmful effects on students and school climate. It is not at all clear whether most school security officers are adequately trained, and there have been reports alleging sexual harassment by poorly-screened and poorly-trained resource officers. If not well-planned, metal detectors can create unsafe crowds of students waiting to enter a building, and contribute to the sense of "school as a prison." Some measures, such as locker or strip searches, have been shown to create severe emotional trauma among some students.

Unfortunately, once again, such negative effects are more likely to occur in urban, predominantly minority schools. School security measures are much more likely to be put in place in urban schools serving a higher proportion of students of color. For example, at Locke High School in Los Angeles, a school that serves predominantly students of color, arbitrary in-class and in-school searches of students and their possessions have created a climate of distrust and resentment of school authorities and law enforcement. These actions may foster the violence and disorder that school administrators hope to avoid. The ACLU of Southern

California filed suit against Los Angeles Unified School District Administrators and the School Board President earlier this year in an attempt to stop suspicionless searches that interfere with the education of students, and are intrusive and embarrassing to students and staff.

CONCLUSIONS

There is no question that schools must do all they can in order to guarantee the safety of students and teachers. In particular, we as a nation must do a better job of understanding and addressing the complex problems that lead to violence in our schools. Yet the experience of zero tolerance and school security measures teaches us that school problems, including issues of safety and disruption, cannot be fixed by rhetoric and political expediency alone.

Photo: Bernard Kleina

At least five national panels of experts on school violence have been convened to identify effective or promising practices in reducing youth violence and increasing school safety. *Not one of those panels has recommended zero tolerance or school security measures as a "best practice."* At best, zero tolerance and school security measures represent a giant experiment, conducted primarily on students of color, on which we have little to no data, but which can clearly have negative effects if poorly planned or implemented. At worst, these measures represent a willingness to throw away a large proportion of students, especially students of color, if their behavior does not conform to increasingly strict standards of school conduct.

There *are* effective alternatives. Federal reports, most recently a report by the U.S. Surgeon General, have found that it is possible to reduce youth violence through preventive programs that teach students alternative strategies for solving their problems. These approaches include problem-solving curricula, schoolwide bullying prevention, culturally competent curricula, and improved school discipline and classroom management. These programs, often involving parents and the community, avoid throwing away any students, instead teaching all students the skills they need to be successful in school and society. Many questions still need to be answered regarding the best approach to ensuring the safety and

security of students in all of our nation's schools. But given what we know about zero tolerance and school security measures, we would submit that the most pressing question is this: What will it take to convince disciplinarians and policymakers that it is time to replace ineffective and discriminatory practices in school discipline with comprehensive and preventive strategies for ensuring safe schools?

APARTHEID IN AMERICAN EDUCATION: HOW OPPORTUNITY IS RATIONED TO CHILDREN OF COLOR IN THE UNITED STATES

Linda Darling-Hammond
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DuBois was right about the problem of the 21st century. The color line divides us still. A recent report by Harvard sociologist Gary Orfield indicates that segregation between and within schools has increased over the last 20 years. Two-thirds of students of color still attend schools that are predominantly "minority," most of them located in central cities and funded at levels substantially below those of neighboring suburban districts. These resource inequalities are typically linked to low pass rates on new state tests for schools with high concentrations of students of color. Furthermore, where tests are linked to decisions about students' promotion and graduation and to sanctions for schools, sharply increasing drop out rates for African American and Latino students mean that many are receiving less education than in the past, rather than more. The standards movement has made clear, and in some ways has deepened, the racial divide between the educational haves and have-nots.

Most Americans seem not to realize that the United States has one of the most unequal educational systems in the industrialized world. In contrast to European and Asian nations that fund schools centrally and equally, the wealthiest 10 percent of school districts in the U.S. spend 10 times more than the poorest 10 percent, and spending ratios of 3 to 1 are common within states. School funding lawsuits in New York, California, Alabama, Louisiana, and other states have documented dramatic inequalities in students' access to qualified teachers, curriculum, texts, computers, and other resources. These disparities are closely tied to race and income. Not only do funding systems allocate fewer resources to poor urban districts than to their suburban neighbors, but studies show that, within these districts, schools with high concentrations of low-income and "minority"

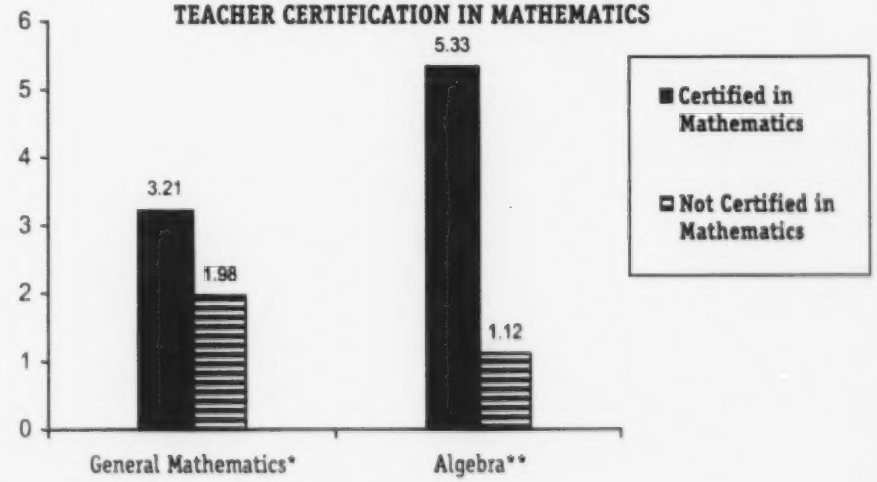
students receive fewer instructional resources than others in the same district. And tracking systems exacerbate these inequalities by segregating many low-income and minority students within schools in low-content classes taught by the least experienced and qualified teachers. In combination these policies leave students of color with fewer and lower quality books, curriculum materials, laboratories, and computers; significantly larger class sizes; less qualified and experienced teachers; and less access to high quality curriculum. Many schools serving low-income and minority students do not even offer the kinds of mathematics and science courses needed to go to college, and they provide lower quality teaching in the classes they do offer. It all adds up.

The fact that the least qualified teachers typically end up teaching the least advantaged students is particularly problematic. Recent studies have found that the difference in teacher quality may represent the single most important school resource differential between children of color and white children. Studies of student achievement in Texas, Alabama, New York, and North Carolina, for example, have concluded that teachers' qualifications—based on measures of expertise, education, and experience—account for a larger share of the variance in student achievement than any other school factor, and can equal or exceed the influence of poverty, race, or parent education. Students in schools with more fully certified teachers have been found to score significantly higher on state competency examinations in mathematics and reading in Texas, California, and New York.

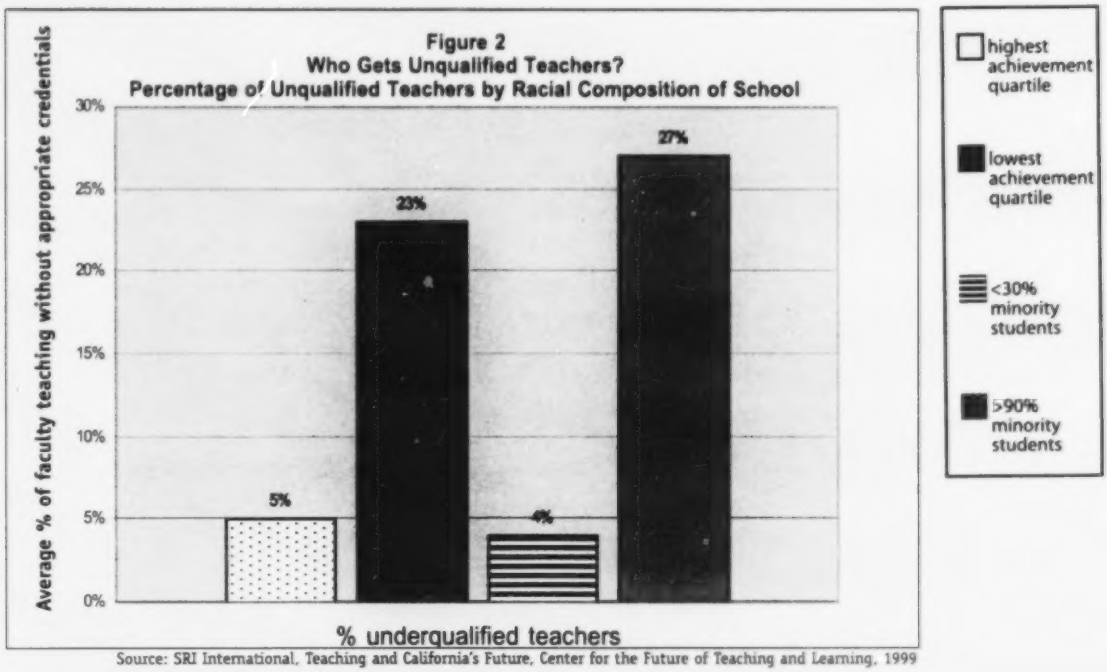
The size of these effects is very large. For example, a North Carolina study found that students of mathematics teachers who were fully certified in their field

Figure 1

EFFECTS ON STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT OF TEACHER CERTIFICATION IN MATHEMATICS



ANOVA results: * p< .01 ** p< .001
Source: P. Hawk, C. Coble, M. Swanson. Certification: It does matter. Journal of Teacher Education, 36 (3) May-June 1985: pp. 13-15.



Source: SRI International. Teaching and California's Future. Center for the Future of Teaching and Learning. 1999

showed achievement gains in algebra nearly five times greater than students of uncertified teachers (See Figure 1). Meanwhile, a Tennessee study found that elementary school students who were assigned to ineffective teachers for three years in a row scored nearly 50 percentile points lower on achievement tests than those assigned to highly effective teachers over the same period of time. Strikingly, in that study, minority students were about half as likely to be assigned to the most effective teachers and nearly twice as likely to be assigned to the least effective teachers.

The distribution of well-prepared teachers is extraordinarily unequal. In California, for example, the proportion of faculty teaching without appropriate credentials is nearly 7 times higher in high-minority schools than in low- minority schools. Nationally, in schools with the highest minority enrollments, students have been found to have less than a 50 percent chance of getting a mathematics or science teacher with a license and a degree in the field that they teach.

Teacher expertise and curriculum quality are interrelated, because expert teachers are a prerequisite for implementing a challenging curriculum. If teachers do not know their content and how to teach it well, many students will not learn. Studies of underprepared teachers consistently find that they have difficulty with curriculum development, classroom management, student motivation, and teaching strategies, especially in areas like the teaching of reading where specialized knowledge is extremely important. With little knowledge about how children learn and develop, or about what to do to support their learning, unprepared teachers are less likely to understand student differences, to anticipate students' knowledge and potential difficulties, or to plan and redirect

instruction to meet students' needs. They are also less likely to see it as their job to do so, often blaming the students if their teaching is not successful. Thus, policies that support the hiring of unprepared teachers exacerbate the inequalities experienced by low-income children and students of color.

Access to teachers who are knowledgeable and skilled is increasingly a matter of educational life and death, especially for students for whom schools are the only avenue for learning. The tens of thousands of elementary children who are taught by untrained teachers are much more likely to fail to learn to read because their teachers lack the knowledge to teach them. In states with high-stakes testing policies, many such students are retained in grade when they fail to pass reading tests—a policy that most studies find ultimately reduces their academic achievement and sharply increases their odds of dropping out. In a number of cities with such policies, fewer than half of minority students now graduate from high school. For the growing number who leave school, the odds of gaining employment are less than 50 percent and the odds of being incarcerated have more than doubled in the last decade as the economy has demanded greater levels of education. Among prison inmates, more than 50 percent are functionally illiterate. Among adjudicated juvenile delinquents, more than 40 percent have learning disabilities that were not diagnosed in school. Nationally, criminal justice system expenditures increased by 900 percent over the last decade while education spending increased by 25 percent in real dollar terms. In addition to being a tragic loss of human potential, this is hardly the most productive use of our society's resources.

If we are to educate instead of incarcerate, our teachers will need ever more access to knowledge about how to meet higher expectations with a more diverse student body. This requires both ongoing improvements in teacher education and serious attention to the teacher labor market. Students' lack of access to well-qualified teachers is a function of several factors:

- **Noncompetitive teacher salaries that are also substantially unequal across districts.** Teachers' salaries lag behind those for liberal arts graduates by 25 percent and behind those for engineers by 40 percent on average. These differentials—which are worse in poor districts—contribute to recruitment and retention problems. Nationally, the highest paid teachers in low-income schools earn 30 percent less than those in affluent schools. Spending on teachers' salaries in the U.S. dropped from 50 percent of the education dollar in 1970 to only about 36 percent today. Much of our funding is spent outside the classroom instead of on what matters most.
- **Dismal working conditions in many schools, especially those serving the least advantaged students.** Large classes, severe overcrowding of facilities, and inadequate stocks of books and materials create stressful conditions in many schools that serve the most economically disadvantaged students. Not surprisingly, these schools have difficulty retaining well-qualified teachers who have other options.

- **Dysfunctional personnel practices that make it difficult to hire and keep qualified teachers.** Especially in large cities, the hiring of underqualified teachers is often caused by cumbersome hiring procedures, late hiring caused by seniority transfer provisions and late budget decisions that cause qualified applicants to take jobs elsewhere. In California, for example, nearly 50 percent of newly hired teachers in 1998 were hired after August 1, and 25 percent were hired after the start of the school year, mostly in disadvantaged urban districts. In addition, many districts bypass well-qualified applicants with greater education and experience in order to hire untrained teachers who cost less in states that allow them to do so.

- **Lack of recruitment incentives for high-need fields and locations.** States that have successfully addressed shortages have introduced scholarship and forgivable loan programs, for trained candidates in high-need fields like mathematics, science, and special education, for teachers of color, who are in critically short supply, and for those who teach in high-need locations like cities and poor rural districts. Federal programs like these nearly eliminated the hiring of underqualified teachers during the 1970s. Unfortunately, these programs were dropped in the early 1980s.

- **Overreliance on pathways into teaching, such as emergency hiring and short-term alternative routes, that have extremely high attrition rates.** On average, underprepared teachers are most likely to leave teaching quickly. For example, about 40 percent of emergency credentialed teachers in California leave within a year (more than 3 times the rate for credentialed teachers), and about 60 percent of those who enter through short-term alternative routes have left within three years. Districts that hire these teachers experience a revolving door of teachers into and out of teaching, rather than a stable teaching force.

- **Inadequate supports for beginning teachers.** Nationally, about 30 percent of new teachers leave within the first five years. In urban districts, attrition rates are often higher. In many schools, beginning teachers are given the largest course loads with the most educationally needy students and the least planning time. Attrition is sharply reduced where novices are mentored by veteran teachers, but many disadvantaged districts lack mentoring programs.

These problems are not inevitable, and some states and districts have made great headway in ensuring that every child can have access to caring, competent, and qualified teachers. Connecticut, for example, spent fifteen years on a coherent set of policies that ended shortages, improved the quality of the teaching force for all students, and sharply increased achievement. It became the top-ranked state in the nation in reading and mathematics even while its large population of low-income students, students of color, and language minority students grew. Connecticut enacted common sense policies that bring and keep well-prepared teachers in teaching and ensure they have incentives to teach where they are

most needed. These included higher and more equalized salaries; stronger teacher education, including training in how to meet the needs of English language learners and special needs students, and mentoring for all beginning teachers; scholarships for the training of high-need teachers, including teachers of color and those in shortage fields; elimination of emergency credentialing; and extra funding for school districts serving the most educationally vulnerable students.

The question of whether all children deserve to be taught by well-qualified teachers should not be resolved by default to the antiquated, discriminatory systems that have produced the outcomes we have today. Many other high-achieving countries—and some of our own states—have enacted the policies necessary to assure that all students have teachers who have the preparation and support to teach them well. They consider this an investment in the public good. So should we.

SMALL SCHOOLS: AN ANTI-RACIST INTERVENTION IN URBAN AMERICA

Michelle Fine and Linda Powell
City University of New York

An Imaginary Welcome

There are a number of things you'll need to know as this school year begins. Managing the large number of adults and children in this building requires certain things. First and foremost, students will have to fit in with the program as it exists, and get along as best they can. We have neither time nor resources nor capacity to see anyone—adult or child—as an individual. In fact, individuality may be considered a discipline problem due to the sheer number of people to be dealt with. It will be important for students, teachers ***and*** *parents to accept a certain amount of anonymity and invisibility. There will be fights, and the police will be called. Adults in the building cannot be expected to intervene in cliques or gangs or any difficult group dynamics. We will do what we can to make the school safe, although uniforms, metal detectors and armed guards may give the school the feel of a prison. While we would like for students to be academically successful, we must concentrate first on cleanliness, safety and order. Parents and guardians will have to make appointments, and will be asked for identification and scanned before entering the building. If you can't adapt, we can't accommodate you here. Thank you again for your attention, and we look forward to having you at XYZ School.*

Close your eyes—who do you imagine are the students in this school? Are they white, suburban and middle class? Does this sound like a private school? While this address is never *actually* given, this is the message sent by the typical large urban high school "serving" poor youth of color. This school in any city in America will have approximately 1500 students "on record" in the 9th grade, and will graduate between 150 and 300. Large urban schools, with their message of anonymity and their dismal dropout statistics, would never be tolerated if they were educating white middle class youth.

We write with a sense of urgency about this assault on youth of color in urban America. We write, too, with a sense of hope that changing the size of schools can make a dramatic difference. Small schools have been and can continue to be developed as part of a broad based democratic movement for racial justice in urban districts. These schools are not only, in and of themselves, potential spaces for critical education and justice, but they are the hotbeds for generating radical social movements, including, at the moment, the struggle against high-stakes standardized testing. We worry that the nation's refusal to overhaul large failing schools for poor youth of color, in combination with the rise of high-stakes testing and the mass incarceration of Black and Latino youth, represents a new crisis, calling for a mobilized struggle, by and for youth of color in America.

It is apparent that large urban high schools that warehouse massive numbers of youth are failing, have failed and should be radically transformed within the public sector. At present, the poorer and, in some cities, the more African American the student body, the larger the school, the greater the percent of long-term substitutes, uncertified teachers, teachers teaching out of their certification areas, teachers who have been dismissed from one school and "bumped" to another. What a bitter and ruthless irony that the students who need the most from education have disproportionate access to the least equipped educators. Many circumstances in large schools may mistakenly appear, at first glance, to be due to an uncaring teacher or a badly run school building or even a troubled student. However, research has demonstrated that these conditions are often related to school size, and school size is too often related to the class, race and ethnicity of the students. When organizations of any kind get too big, they are dysfunctional for the youth "attending" (or not) and the adults educating. While previous generations of adults attended large schools (and we don't remember them as being so bad), the truth is that most students dropped out and those of us who graduated didn't even notice. School size matters.

When we use the phrase "small school," we mean a building or a school within a building of many schools, with fewer than 400 students. We mean something very different from the typical large high school. In addition to smaller numbers of students and adults, small schools combine commitments to small size with rigorous teaching, academic supports for the achievement of all children toward high standards and, often, deep engagements with local communities. Small schools are intimate. Educators know your child, work closely with each other and with parents. Students take on leadership roles. And small schools are often willing to engage the "hard conversations" about racism, politics, power and the role of schools in community development.

When you look at the social science literature you find a large and consistent body of evidence which demonstrates that small schools, particularly high schools, are the single most powerful intervention, within the field of education,

for transforming the outcomes of urban youth and young adults. Small schools enhance academic achievement of youth, urban youth, youth of color and poor youth in particular; reduce the gap between the "top" and the "bottom" levels of achievement; diminish rates of violence and suspension and reduce rates of dropping out while enhancing persistence and college admission. Small schools are economically more efficient than large schools; educationally more productive than large schools; more satisfying to educators; more engaging for parents; and safer than large schools.

Small schools are not "another experiment being thrown at poor students of color." In fact, wealthy and upper middle class parents have long known about, and kept a secret of, the power of small schools. The average prep school enrolls about 300 students, the average Catholic high school serves closer to 600 and the typical urban high school has, on roll, 1500–3000 students. Across studies, methods, cities and age levels, the evidence is consistent: students in small schools outperform students in large schools. For everyday urban, suburban and rural American schools, major studies from Philadelphia, New York and Chicago document the dramatic gains achieved by poor and working class youth of color in small schools relative to their peers in large schools.[66]

While small schools outperform large schools across contexts, it is equally true that "small" is a necessary but not sufficient condition for educating all students to high standards. Size is a means, not an end; small leverages possibility. By creating small schools, districts create public settings in which a community of adults takes seriously the strengths and needs of youth and can collaborate with parents and community. Adults involved in small schools can engage in

Photo: Jim West

meaningful professional development directed toward enhanced academic achievement for students. In small schools, students and teachers can more easily be held accountable for academic outcomes.

ORGANIZING FOR EDUCATIONAL JUSTICE

The good news is that there is a growing national consensus about the importance of school size. Progressives and conservatives, community activists, parents, educators and students recognize the power and potential of small schools. Even those who pursue vouchers, charters and independent schools recognize that small is a critical condition for improvement. In fact, it's hard to find someone who doesn't acknowledge that large schools are a bad design for students and for educators—especially for the poorest children in America. And, paradoxically, it is difficult to find a district willing to change the status quo of large schools for poor kids.

Looking across urban America, we know what high quality small schools look like, even and especially for the poorest (and richest) children in America. We know how to create high standards and the conditions necessary for youth to meet those standards. We even know how to create 10-100 such schools in a district. However, with all of the evidence and experience, we have yet to create a district that dares to take the knowledge of quality small schools to the level of full system reform. There is no question that small schools are better than large ones, yet there are many questions about going from systems of (mostly) large high schools to systems of small, accountable high schools.

Critics often respond that it will be difficult and costly to "take small schools to scale" district-wide. We disagree. Small schools could easily be the leading edge of systemic strategy if districts decided to support and learn from successful small schools rather than control or police or envy them.

As a necessary prod to systemic change, organizing must take place at different levels of the public education system. Educators, parents, activists and students across urban American are beginning to push three strategies:

- **Reform existing schools**—break large high schools into smaller schools, like the Julia Richman model in New York City or multiplexes in Chicago-and assure adequate resources and autonomy for small schools. A building is not a school-it can be home to many schools!
- **Create new schools**-create possibilities for new schools to be developed in collaboration with community based organizations throughout a city. This strategy has stronger potential for activating community-school alliances, but ultimately—for the full system to be engaged—we need to combine strategy one (above) and the creation of new schools.
- **Declare a moratorium on large schools**—-simply don't build new ones (while we dramatically reorganize existing ones). In Illinois, when evidence that the

> death penalty was being unfairly and unjustly applied became overwhelming, public outcry led to a moratorium on its use. Evidence that large high schools do not work is overwhelming. For the sake of the youth and educators, a similar movement to halt the construction and support of large high schools must be mobilized.

Educators, parents and activists disagree on many things. There are important debates about curriculum, about culture, about the role that public education should play in the lives of children and communities. And these debates are worth having. However, the very notion of debate—impassioned conversation toward a decision for improvement—implies a setting small enough that people can talk and listen. Smaller school size is fundamentally embedded in any commitment to genuine school transformation. By their very nature, large schools encourage student failure, teacher burnout and parent/community alienation.

The small schools movement is two decades old, and is growing and thriving in urban, suburban and rural America. For educators and activists concerned with the achievement gap, lack of opportunities for high school dropouts, school based violence and alienation among youth, small schools have emerged as a compelling answer. Scores of studies have documented their positive academic and social impact. Yet we have still failed, as a nation, to produce a district in which small schools are the norm rather than the exception; in which small schools enjoy support and development opportunities systemically. Given the long arm of prisons and jails into poor communities, and given the inhospitality of today's economy for undereducated poor and working class young adults, the consequences of systemic miseducation are severe. Indeed, the stakes are very high-for youth in general, for poor youth of color in particular, and for us all.

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APPENDIX I

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

ZERO TOLERANCE AND SCHOOL SECURITY MEASURES

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APPENDIX II

BIOGRAPHIES

Tammy Johnson is the Director of the ERASE (Expose Racism and Advance School Excellence) Initiative. Tammy has many years of community experience working on school reform issues. She has authored reports on school equity issues, including *Vouchers: A Trap, Not a Choice: California School Vouchers Would Increase Racial Inequality*. Articles she has written have appeared in publications such as *Leadership* magazine and *Colorlines*.

Jennifer Emiko Boyden, Program Associate with the ERASE Initiative, studied Psychology and Women's Studies at Pomona College in Claremont, California. After returning to the Bay Area (where she grew up), Jennifer received a Masters Degree in Social Work from San Francisco State University, with a concentration in Social Development.

William J. Pittz, ARC Research Associate, graduated Phi Beta Kappa from Northwestern University. In 1999, Will received a Public Service Fellowship to study social services and public education reform at Harvard University, where he received the Kennedy School of Government's outstanding thesis of the year award.

Beverly Cross is a professor of education at the University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee. She conducts qualitative inquiry related to curriculum planning, urban education, professional development, and school reform and writes in the areas of teacher diversity, urban education, multicultural curriculum, and curriculum development.

Linda Darling-Hammond is currently Charles E. Ducommun Professor of Teaching and Teacher Education at Stanford University. Her research, teaching, and policy work focus on issues of school restructuring, teacher education, and educational equity. Prior to her appointment at Stanford, Dr. Darling-Hammond was William F. Russell Professor in the Foundations of Education at Teachers College, Columbia University, where she was also Co-Director of the National Center for Restructuring Education, Schools, and Teaching (NCREST).

Michelle Fine is a professor of social psychology, urban education and women's studies at the Graduate School and University Center, City University of New York. She is a social psychologist engaged with both qualitative and quantitative methods, studying when injustice is perceived, when it is resisted and how it is negotiated by those who pay the most serious price for social inequities.

Peter E. Leone is a professor in the Department of Special Education at the University of Maryland, College Park, and Director of the National Center on Education and Juvenile Justice. He can be contacted at *leonep@wam.umd.edu*.

Linda Mizell is a writer and consultant in anti-racist curriculum and professional development. Her writing credits include the award-winning Teacher's Guide for the PBS series "Africans in America" and THINK ABOUT RACISM (Walker Publishing, 1992), a text for middle and high school students. She is currently a doctoral candidate at the Harvard Graduate School of Education and a Lecturer in the Department of Education at Tufts University, where she teaches courses on the history of education and on education for social justice.

Linda C. Powell has been working with groups and individuals on issues of power and change for almost thirty years. From 1997–2001, Dr. Powell was Associate Professor of Psychology and Education in the Department of Organization and Leadership at Teachers College, Columbia University. She is currently Visiting Professor at the Graduate Center, City University of New York.

Russell J. Skiba is an associate professor in the Department of Counseling and Educational Psychology at Indiana University-Bloomington, and Director of the Safe and Responsive Schools Project at the Indiana Education Policy Center. He can be contacted at *skiba@indiana.edu*.

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- Citizens for Justice, Equity and Fairness, Dandridge, TN
- Coalition of Alabamians Reforming Education, Selma, AL
- Coalition for Quality Education, Toledo, OH
- Colorado Progressive Coalition, Denver, CO
- Springfield Alliance for Equality and Respect, Springfield, OR
- Democracy Resource Center, Lexington, KY
- Direct Action for Rights and Equality, Providence, RI
- El Centro Hispano, Durham, NC
- Generation Y, a project of Southwest Youth Collaborative, Chicago, IL
- Indian People's Action, Missoula, MT
- Institute on Race & Poverty, Minneapolis, MN
- Justice Matters Institute / FAIR-CARE Coalition, San Francisco, CA
- Latinos Unidos Siempre, Salem, OR
- Milwaukee Catalyst, Milwaukee, WI
- Mothers on the Move, New York, NY
- Padres Unidos, Denver, CO
- Parents for Unity, Los Angeles, CA
- Partners in Education, Nyack, NY
- People United for a Better Oakland, Oakland, CA
- Seattle Young People's Project, Seattle, WA
- Southwest Organizing Project, Albuquerque, NM
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- Tenants and Workers Support Committee, Alexandria, VA

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Jim West, Photographer (Detroit, MI)

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Racial Profiling and Punishment in U.S. Public Schools

How Zero Tolerance Policies and High Stakes Testing Subvert Academic Excellence and Racial Equity

October 30, 2001

News Release - October 30, 2001:
Report Charges Racial Profiling in U.S. Schools:
A National Day of Action for Racial Justice Sets Stage for Report on Policies that Discriminate Against Students of Color

Full Report
(526KB PDF file requires free Adobe® Acrobat® Reader.)

Racial Profiling and Punishment in U.S. Public Schools

How Zero Tolerance Policies and High Stakes Testing Subvert Academic Excellence and Racial Equity

Executive Summary

The concept of racial profiling in education policy is not new. The very premise of the Brown v. Board of Education decision in 1954 was based on the realization that race was a determining factor in who receives quality education in the United States. Nearly 50 years later, we face the reality that education policy continues to single out students of color for disparate treatment. *Racial Profiling and Punishment in U.S. Public Schools* analyzes the critical flaws in current education policy trends that impact students of color, including:

Ignoring Racist Polices that Yield Unequal Outcomes: Fair treatment, full access, and equal opportunity are still intangible notions for many students of color. Policies that fail to acknowledge and address institutional racism reinforce and exacerbate issues such as drop out rates and the racial achievement gap. Although the Guns Free Schools Act mandates expulsion for the possession of firearms, many school districts have expanded the policy beyond its original scope, suspending students for having Midol, chains attached to Tweety Bird wallets and organic cough drops. This occurs despite research showing that high school sophomores who have dropped out of school were three times more likely to have been suspended than those who stayed in school.

Blaming Individuals for Systemic Inequalities: Many policies, such as those fueling the proliferation of standardized tests, assume that all students are on a level playing field. In California, for example, only 24 percent of Blacks and 25 percent of Latinos passed the math portion of the state's exit exam this year, the higher failure rates occurring in resource-deprived districts with high populations of students of color. Thus, low-test scores are attributed to individual student shortcomings, rather than systemic inequalities. Similarly, it

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is assumed that students who are suspended the most, especially students of color are, in fact, "the problem." Those who interpret student behaviors and administer punishments are assumed to be free of subjectivity and bias.

Diverting attention and resources away from real solutions: Sadly, high-stakes testing and excessive school security measures are big-ticket items in terms of expenditures. Hundreds of millions of dollars are being spent on excessive testing and security. For instance, in the 2000-2001 school year Chicago Public Schools spent over $35 million on school security services. These expenditures directly compete with the kinds of programs and policies that would improve academic performance and school safety for all students.

There are viable alternatives. Students deserve top-notch teachers who have the skills to teach in today's racially, culturally, linguistically, and developmentally diverse classrooms. Inexperienced and undercredentialed teachers are teaching millions of school children, especially those in inner-city schools. Likewise, ample funding for new and expanded staff and facilities must be committed and targeted to the highest-need schools. Currently, schools in greatest need of class size reduction are those with the fewest funds to hire more staff and the least amount of space to hold more classes. *Racial Profiling and Punishment in U.S. Public Schools* recommends the following first steps toward achieving racial justice and academic excellence in schools:

- **Eliminate Exit Exams:** The vastly unequal educational experiences and opportunities afforded to students of different racial and economic backgrounds are reflected in standardized test scores. Like the poll tests of yesteryear, today's high-stakes tests in effect deny learning and life opportunities to students of color.

- **Repeal Zero Tolerance Policies:** With the increased presence of police in schools, mandatory punishments, and the expanded use of suspensions and expulsions, students of color are getting pushed out or thrown out of school at alarming rates. Zero tolerance policies are being implemented in unfair and unreasonable ways. If educating children is a priority, then local school districts and states must revise their zero tolerance policies to comply with the original federal guidelines

- **Refocus Our Priorities:** There is no excuse for continuing to perpetuate racially discriminatory policies and funding priorities when proven solutions are readily available. Schools and districts that serve high-need populations should be prioritized to receive equitable resources for fully certified teachers and smaller schools and classes.

- **Racial Equity Report Cards**: Many school districts either will not or cannot provide the community with important data on key education issues. Even when partial data is available, it may not be disaggregated by race. If data is disaggregated, a district may use different sets of racial designations for different indicators. This makes it difficult to compare, for example, the racial composition a district's high school graduates with the makeup of the whole student body. Schools must keep the public informed of their progress by issuing annual Racial Equity Report Cards. Where disparities exist, schools must implement Racial Equity Plans including concrete, measurable goals and timetables to address those inequities.

It's easier to blame individuals than to change the system. However, if we are to confront the fundamental problems of public education, we must be willing to acknowledge and eliminate widespread institutionalized racial inequality. Simply put, we must take up the challenge to provide every child with a quality public

education. Not one is expendable.

Racial Profiling and Punishment in U.S. Public Schools:

News Release - October 30, 2001:
Report Charges Racial Profiling in U.S. Schools:
A National Day of Action for Racial Justice Sets Stage for Report on Policies that Discriminate Against Students of Color

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